

# SATSANG

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**Baha'I Temple: Yajnya Culture Dance  
Agnihotra: An Enhancer of Environment of Life**

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**Cover**

Gwynn Oak Avenue Baha'I Center, Baltimore, Maryland.

# Baha'I Temple: Yajnya Culture Dance

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Preston Vismale invited Maria Broom, Jamal Wilson and Irvin Gates to attend 12:00 noon Sunday Baha'I Prayer at the Gwynn Oak Avenue Temple, Baltimore. He invited us to give a talk on Yajnya and then perform Yajnya for the assemblage.

We went on Sunday, February 6, 1983. There was a heavy snowstorm on this day. Undaunted, Irvin, Jamal and Maria arrived at the Baha'I Temple and were warmly greeted by everyone. Mr. Vismale ushered Irvin to the front of the Temple where he set up his Yajnya copper pyramid. Dressed in his meditation whites, Irvin prepared the pyramid to be lit.

Miss Cerana read the following prayer as we bowed our heads:

"I render Thee Thanks Oh Thou Who has lit Thy Fire within my soul and cast beams of Thy Light into my heart. That Thou has taught Thy servants how to make mention of Thee and revealed unto them the ways whereby they can supplicate Thee, through Thy Most Holy and Exalted Tongue and Thy Most August and precious speech. But for Thy leave, who is there that could venture to express Thy might and Thy grandeur and were it not for Thy instruction, who is the man that could discover the ways of Thy pleasure in the Kingdom of Gods creation . . . ."

Taped flute music echoed through the hall as Maria Broom came down the aisle with lighted candle in hand and performed a Prayer Dance. As she moved expertly with the candle, Irvin, sitting in lotus on the floor

before the Yajnya alter, lit the Yajnya fire in the copper pyramid.

With Maria dancing and the flute sounds waving through the Temple, Irvin's baritone voice boomed:

"Bhoooh Swaha Agnaye Idam Na Mama  
Buwah Swaha Wayawe Idam Na Mama  
Swah Swaha Sooryaya Idam Na Mama  
Bhoor-Bhuwah-Swah Swaha Prajapataye  
Idam Na Mama."

(These are Vyahruti Homa mantras for peace and purification.)

After each one of the first three mantras, Irvin added a drop of ghee to the fire. After the fourth mantra, Irvin added a spoonful of ghee to the fire. (Ghee is clarified butter prepared from unsalted natural cow butter.)

After the Homa was performed the room was filled with delicate aromas of nutritious purification and peace reigned. The music combined with atmosphere creating a happy heaven that had hearts melting and souls rising.

Visual images of Grace through the dance impressed everybody's mind with gifts from unseen angels of goodness casting rays of love throughout the universe this day.

As the flames flickered lower, Irvin's baritone voice chanted:

"Om Tryambakam Yajamahe  
Sugandim Pushtivardanam  
Oorvarookemeva Bandanan  
Mrityoor Mookshiya Mamritat Swaha."  
Then he added a drop of ghee to the fire.

Finally, the music and the chant stopped and Irvin's chant echoed throughout the Temple. Instantaneously, Jamal motioned to Mr.



*Jamal Wilson  
Baltimore, Md.*

Vismale and he immediately began chanting with Irvin. Jamal joined them. Maria Broom harmonized along. A member of the audience chimed in. After the mantra was uttered a drop of ghee was put into fire and this continued for some time.

The experience of hearing mantras is one that can only be experienced to get an understanding of the peace that floods the body in this kind of atmosphere.

Preston Vismale spoke to the audience: "I'd like to welcome everyone here. I'd like to point out first of all that what we experienced (Yajnya) is not a regular everyday Baha'I occurrence, but is beautiful just the same.



*Preston Vismale*

"Before we go on, I would like to give special thanks to J. Irvin Gates, Maria Broom and to Jamal. Before we get into the topic for the day which is 'Why Do We Pray and Where Does It Come From?' I would like one of you to say something about this Yajnya which you experienced."

Jamal took to his feet and addressed the audience: "The words that you just heard are Sanskrit words from the Vedas. This is not anything new. Vedic knowledge was revealed as a storehouse of wisdom. Therein it is stated that Yajnya was bequeathed to mankind as a boon or gift at the time of Creation. Through the course of time things changed and man started wreaking havoc with his free will and this ancient knowledge was lost.

"Things have now gotten so bad and therefore this ancient knowledge of purification through the agency of fire has been resuscitated again. Some very high people on the face of the earth have made it their task to see that this great knowledge is spread to all people everywhere. And the main center from which this knowledge spread to the world is Baltimore, Maryland.

"The knowledge and practice of Yajnya purification of the atmosphere is in its tenth year in Baltimore area. It is practiced on all the continents now and most of the countries of our planet. It negates pollution and the stress it produces. There is so much stress on our minds, in the atmosphere and in the biosphere of the earth. All of us are aware of the stress within our families.

"Maybe I should mention something about the stress in the atmosphere of recent studies that have been conducted. In U.S.A. TODAY a Harvard University scientist reports astounding insights. He says the pollution data that has been gathered to date has been given by computers. Very, very little of the atmospheric pollution data was gathered by actual scientific analysis of atmospheric

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samples of the gases and chemicals present therein.

"It has been only recently that balloons were sent up into the atmosphere with proper equipment to gather the necessary data. However, what scientists do know is that exactly at sunrise a flood of energies and electricities assail the earth and it lasts for just a short time – just a few minutes. It is said that the rate of this occurrence is critical.

"This Yajnya which we just performed is done intermittently but it just fits within the framework of sunrise and sunset Yajnya, i.e. Agnihotra. Agnihotra is the basic Yajnya which sets in the primary healing cycle in nature.

"In the sunrise and sunset Agnihotra Yajnya rice is the offering to the fire. One of the reasons is when the rice, dried cow dung, and unsalted clarified butter combine in the fire in the special atmosphere of sunrise/sunset the atmosphere is fumigated. It leads to reduction of stress.

"There has been some documentation in the West and in India of the effect of this Yajnya atmosphere on bacteria and plants.

"Last month, I cut an article out of the newspaper that substantiates some of the revelations told to us through *Satsang*, e.g. the molecular structure of the earth itself is changing. This is happening because of man's ruthlessness. Consequently, the vegetation that will grow will not be digestible. *Another article states that scientists see the cellular structure of plants changing now.* It is reported that in some areas of Germany, 90%

of the newly planted trees did not grow. In some areas even the grass has stopped growing.

"There is just so much reaction now from Mother Earth. However, The Almighty Father has given a boon to his children, a way out. The process of Agnihotra is done on a farm where you need not use any fertilizer whatsoever. In the spring, you may ride down Windsor Mill Road to Kuntz Road. There they have been performing round the clock Yajnya for over four years. The corn and tomatoes and other things that are grown there are so succulent and nutritious and tasty.

"And where the water is polluted, and all water is now polluted to some degree, this process of Yajnya with Homa Therapy performance will cleanse the water resource.

"If you take the ash from Agnihotra Yajnya and put it in a jug of water, it will purify the water and help the system.

"For the last several years my family, including the children, take the Agnihotra ash daily before we eat.

"Here is this Om Tryambakam Yajnya that you are witnessing, only ghee is the offering. This Yajnya gives nutrition and purity to the atmosphere. If you had asthma or breathing difficulties and came in here where we are performing this Homa, you would feel relieved. It is just automatic.

"If anyone wants to know more about this Yajnya just let us know and we will travel anywhere free of charge to show them how to perform it correctly."

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Preston Vismale: "I do hope and pray that everybody enjoyed or more than enjoyed, and got something from the Yajnya presentation. I would like to point out to many of you who do not know that Agnihotra history is very ancient. The purpose of showing the ritual today is to supplement the topic of today: Why Do We Pray?"

Preston gave this talk on "Why Do We Pray." Christy sang a song. Comments were made by Mr. Johnson, Keeper of the Temple. He said that just this morning he heard over the radio from the University of Maryland Agriculture Extension program that this was the time when plants are undergoing much stress and special care needed to be taken to keep them alive."

Then we went to a room in the basement. Here we met with a lady of a day nursery who teaches pre-school children. She has access to the premises and thus she is able to perform Agnihotra morning and evening there. She said that a friend of hers living above the nursery had physical troubles. Agnihotra was helping this person get well.

This nursery school teacher also teaches dance at the nursery school. She says one time she did not perform Yajnya with the children before her dance class and the children were very undisciplined. This nursery school teacher said that every time she performed dance before the nursery school children she performed Yajnya first and the children became disciplined. She said she noticed a great deal of improvement in the air smell and quality within her building.

Three other people expressed interest in learning more about the mantras and the performance of Yajnyas.

There was so much friendship, trust and love on that beautiful Sunday.

# Agnihotra: An Enhancer of Environment of Life



(Following are excerpts from the book *Agnihotra* written by Mr. M. S. Parkhe who recently toured the U.S.)

The ever deteriorating environment, no doubt, drew attention of Government authorities, who in turn laid emphasis on strict legislation to avoid further deterioration. While such a step was quite necessary, a positive approach for enhancing the health of the environment does not appear to have received the necessary attention, excepting some emphasis on afforestation. An attempt has been made in this chapter, to show how Agnihotra and allied rituals contribute in a positive way, as enhancers of environmental health.

During the ritual of Agnihotra, products like (a) fumes, (b) heat, (c) energy, (d) moisture, (e) gases, (f) ash and (g) sound waves with vibrations of certain frequency, are

created. These products have a definite beneficial effect, as will be seen, both from individual and collective angles. A few instances of this effect on life in general are given below.

## Effect on Ecology

A number of experiments which were devised to get scientific explanations confirm the effects of Agnihotra on plant life. The data of the experiments, thus collected, have been maintained. Results of these preliminary experiments are quite encouraging and yield the basis for a further scientific analysis of the results.

## Effect of Generated Fumes

In Agnihotra, various substances such as cow ghee, stems of certain plants, grains of rice, aromatic gums and resins, etc., are used as oblation over the fire created out of cow dung cake. A process of fumigation which has wide applications in agriculture is thus started. These days, fumigation of air as well as of soil is done with the help of chemicals. These chemicals kill the pathogenic forms and thereby sterilize the surroundings. They are not only costly, but their residual effects are also quite hazardous and harmful to public health. Agnihotra, on the other hand, does not involve any major expenses and is within the reach of a common man. The gases released during its process get dissipated easily over a wide area and the medicinal effect of the minute dose becomes visible. Such gases are of temporal and spiral type. The fumes produced in Agnihotra rise up in the atmosphere in a spiral manner and, therefore, reach higher levels. For details regarding concentration and stability of

these gases at different levels, further investigations can be undertaken. J. E. Miller and his co-workers have recently shown the positive effect of fumigation on crops. These effects have been mainly, due to the presence of SO<sub>2</sub> in the fumes.

These researchers have further proved that the concentration of gas over a field varies with time due to changing speed of wind and turbulence. At both the times stipulated for Agnihotra, wind speed is relatively low but the turbulence in cosmic atmosphere is quite high for a very short period.

The gases released during the Agnihotra ritual associate with the turbulent atmosphere and, consequently, spread over a large area. Though they may become diluted, the low concentration is more effective in exerting a biocidal effect on microbes without any damaging effect on human health. As such, gases maintain their biocidal level for a short period of 12 hours or so. To regain that level, another round of Agnihotra needs to be performed. It is with this view that Agnihotra is recommended to be performed twice a day and that too at the two critical moments. As the biocidal level of gases from Agnihotra can exist within a certain perimeter of performance, more such spots need to be selected for Agnihotra to have its effect over a wider area. It is observed that the plants grown under the Agnihotra atmosphere are generally free from disease and are healthier than identical plants grown in non-Agnihotra atmosphere. Thus, one can say that Agnihotra, while being economically inexpensive, has a positive effect on the health of plants.

### Effect of Liberated Energy

The ingredients used for Agnihotra contain a large amount of stored energy, which is released after their burning. Dr. Satya Prakash has worked out some details in this connection. He has shown that every ingredient has a definite ignition temperature; and that at this temperature the heat generated by igniting the substance equals the heat dissipated in the atmosphere. The ignition temperature of rice is about 300°C and 1 gram of rice can produce 3500 Cal of heat on burning. Similarly, the ignition temperature of cow ghee is 600°C and 1 gram of cow ghee can produce 9300 Cal of heat on burning. Similarly, the ignition temperature of other ingredients used for Agnihotra range between 300°C and 600°C; and, individually, 1 gram of them can produce 3,000 to 10,000 Cal of heat. It is thus evident from the above that the burning of ingredients during Agnihotra will release a large amount of heat energy. It is estimated that temperatures developed during the Agnihotra process range from 300°C to 1300°C at different levels. Such a high temperature is bound to have varied effects both on the ingredients and on the atmosphere. As far as the ingredients are concerned they will get completely burnt and produce CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O or some time CO and H<sub>2</sub>O. The heat released will speedily rise like a column in the atmosphere and will reach reasonable height, sometimes even above the cloud level.

This energy will have the following varied effects on the atmosphere:

- (i) It will dissipate and thereby increase the temperature at certain heights. It will have a biocidal



effect on a number of atmospheric microorganisms and will cause their immunization. It will purify the atmosphere and reduce its pollution level.

- (ii) This heat energy will induce chemical reactions among various atmospheric components. It will also cause conversion of certain substances into others.
- (iii) It can also incite a large scale displacement of gases. Such a displacement will take away the inocula and propagulas of microbes over wider distances and thereby give a disease-free umbrella over crops grown in the Agnihotra atmosphere.
- (iv) Complete combustion of ingredients will produce a larger amount of  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ .  $\text{CO}_2$  produced due to complete combustion and also due to conversion of  $\text{CO}$  and  $\text{CO}_2$ , will increase its level in the atmosphere. During the daytime, this increased level of  $\text{CO}_2$  will cause more photosynthetic activity in plants and thereby increase their level of productivity. At nighttime,  $\text{CO}_2$  may get loaded on released water molecules and such heavy and enriched droplets will then settle on leaves during the night in the form of  $\text{HCO}_3$  or so.

This is how the atmosphere in the area of Agnihotra will not only get sterilized but also enriched with plant nutrients. Plants growing in such an atmosphere are bound to be

healthier than those which are not grown in such atmosphere. Health, accompanied by a disease-free state, will certainly increase the productivity of crops; and hence the yield of crops in such conditions shows a positive rise. Healthy plants also exert better resistance to disease infection than weak ones.

Experiments conducted on vegetable and fruit crops grown in the Agnihotra atmosphere have indicated that the chlorophyll content in such plants was more than that of other similar plants. Also the size and number of vascular elements in these plants exhibit a large scale increase. This forces one to go deeper to find out detailed reason for the difference. More experiments to confirm the results and to provide data need to be conducted by a larger number of research workers at different localities.

#### **Effect of Mantras**

It is an established fact that sound has a definite effect on the growth of plants. Researches in this century, have shown that definite notes of music have a pronounced effect on the growth of plants. Growth in plant as well as in animal cells is induced due to certain hormones, auxins and other growth promoting substances. Production of such substances can be induced artificially. One of the methods of such artificial induction is vibration. For getting a faster growth of molds/bacteria and for production of antibiotics or other chemicals, shaking is done. Shaking of cultures does give certain vibrations to the growing cells which result in their faster growth. Recently, American workers have discovered an electronic band aid. In this band, two metallic strips are used

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which act as electrodes. When an electric current of certain voltage is passed through these strips, an electromagnetic field is created, which helps in setting up vibrations of definite frequency. When vibrations of specific frequency are given to the wounded portion of the animal body, the cells in the affected area are induced to produce a larger quantity of growth hormone viz. collagen. This results in a faster rate of cell growth in the wounded zone and thereby causes quicker healing of the wound.

Dr. J. C. Bose, in his experiments, in the early twenties of this century, had shown that plants do show a marked effect of music on their growth. He also claimed that plants too have a system parallel to nerves of animals and they also have feelings. His experiments might require further confirmation, but the conclusion that sound waves have an effect on plant growth has to be accepted. In this context one can say that the recitation of specific *mantras* during Agnihotra or Yajnya is responsible for setting up vibrations of certain frequencies in the surrounding. When plants growing in that area come into contact with such vibrations, their cells are induced to produce more growth substances. It may be due to this reason that the plants growing in Agnihotra and Yajnya atmospheres exhibit a more rapid rate of growth. Accepting that the research of Dr. Bose is likely to be further confirmed, then the love and feelings of plants expressed while reciting of *mantras*, are bound to be quite conducive for their growth.